



**United Nations Office
for Disarmament Affairs**

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**BRIEFING TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF
SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2118 (2013)**

Thursday, 5 September 2024, 10:00 AM, Security Council Chamber

As delivered

New York
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Mr. President,
Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

I thank Council members for the opportunity to brief you once again on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. I am providing this briefing on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, who is currently away from the office.

Since the last consideration of this matter by the Council, and consistent with established practice, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has been in regular contact with its counterparts in the OPCW Technical Secretariat on activities related to resolution 2118.

Mr. President,

Since the Council's previous meeting on this matter, the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (or DAT) has continued its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration and subsequent declarations submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic.

As was reported at the last briefing to the Council on this matter, the twenty-seventh round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority was undertaken in Damascus in May 2024. During and subsequent to this round of consultations, the DAT requested explanations from the Syrian National Authority regarding the results of analysis of samples collected by the DAT between September 2020 and April 2023 at two formally declared chemical weapons-related sites. These results indicated potentially undeclared activities related to several chemical warfare agents, including the full

production cycle from research and development to production, testing, and storage for two of those agents.

Although the Syrian Arab Republic provided some additional information on these results, the OPCW Technical Secretariat assessed this information as insufficient. This resulted in the opening of two new outstanding issues in July 2024, raising the total number of issues from 24 to 26, of which seven have been resolved and 19 remain unresolved.

This is an extremely worrying development.

Mr. President,

I have been further informed that the Syrian National Authority did not accept the OPCW Technical Secretariat's proposals for two possible time periods for the twenty-eighth round of consultations.

As a result, on 14 August 2024, the OPCW Technical Secretariat informed the Syrian Arab Republic of its intention to deploy a reduced team to the Syrian Arab Republic to conduct the twenty-eighth round of consultations in mid-September 2024. The planned activities were also updated accordingly, as the DAT would not be in a position to conduct any field visits during the proposed deployment. Through a note verbale dated 19 August 2024, the Syrian Arab Republic informed the OPCW Technical Secretariat that it had no objection to receiving the DAT in mid-September 2024. However, I understand that negotiation of the relevant dates is still ongoing.

Mr. President,

I have been informed that the delayed deployment of the DAT will have an operational impact on the planned schedule for inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (or SSRC). As of the date of this month's report, the Technical Secretariat has not received any new information which may resolve the issues related to the presence of a Schedule 2 chemical in the sample collected during the November 2018 inspection, and to the origin and usage of a chemical of dual-use nature observed by the inspection team during the September 2022 inspection at the SSRC Barzah facilities. The OPCW Technical Secretariat will further engage on these issues with the Syrian National Authority during the next round of SSRC inspections.

As reported previously, the OPCW Technical Secretariat has also requested information regarding the unauthorised movement of the two cylinders related to the chemical weapon incident that took place in Douma on 7 April 2018, which were allegedly destroyed in an attack on a chemical weapons production facility. I have been informed that, as of the date of this report, the Technical Secretariat has not received a response to this request.

Mr. President,

The OPCW Technical Secretariat remains fully committed to implementing its mandate aimed at verifying the fulfilment of the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration obligations under the Convention, decisions by OPCW policy-making organs, and Security Council resolutions.

However, as has been previously emphasized, full cooperation by the Syrian Arab Republic with the OPCW Technical Secretariat is essential to closing all outstanding issues. Considering the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and

discrepancies that remain unresolved, at this time the OPCW Technical Secretariat assesses that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic still cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. I call upon the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with the OPCW Technical Secretariat and respond with urgency to all of the Technical Secretariat's requests.

Mr. President,

I have been advised that the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (or FFM) continues to study all available information related to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and will issue further reports in due course.

The Investigation and Identification Team (or IIT) also continues its investigations into incidents in which the Fact-Finding Mission has determined that chemical weapons were used or likely used in the Syrian Arab Republic and will issue further reports in due course.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

The United Nations will continue to support all efforts to uphold the norm against chemical weapons, and to relegate these dreadful weapons to history. As the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs has emphasized on many occasions, any use of chemical weapons is unacceptable. I also echo the Secretary-General's call to end impunity for all those who dare to use such

weapons, especially against civilians. I urge the members of this Council to unite on this issue and show leadership in demonstrating that impunity in the use of chemical weapons will not be tolerated.

The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to provide whatever support and assistance it can.

I thank you very much for your attention.